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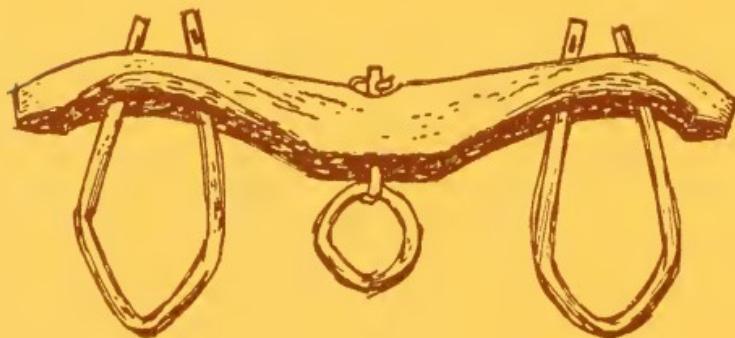
[1925]

[140]

Lincoln, Abraham
The Bear Den. Written about 1844.

[1925 ed.; rpt. 1940.]

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THE
BEAR
HUNT

BY
ABRAHAM LINCOLN



WRITTEN
ABOUT
1844

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<http://www.archive.org/details/bearhunt00linc>

The Bear Hunt

by
Abraham Lincoln

Written about 1844

One Hundred Copies

Printed under direction of
Charles T. White, Hancock, N. Y.
Distributed by Ladies' Aid Society of
Emory Methodist Church, Hancock, N. Y.
Herald Print, Hancock, N. Y.

THE BEAR HUNT

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K 1925 Jr

[1940]

INTRODUCTION

Abraham Lincoln neither wrote, nor attempted to write, much verse. He wrote a short piece about a boyhood playmate whom he found insane when in 1844 he made campaign speeches in Indiana in the year 1844. The visit to his old home at Gentryville, Ind., prompted him to write a longer poem, "The Bear Hunt," in which he participated.

In 1925 Charles T. White of Hancock, owner of an extensive Lincoln collection, obtained consent of the Morgan Library to photostat the manuscript of "The Bear Hunt."

The manuscript is one of the most valuable of all Lincoln autographs. Collectors say it would sell for \$15,000. Here is Lincoln's "Bear Hunt":

g. white w. howard
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A wild bear chase dids't never see?
Then hast thou lived in vain—
Thy richest bump of glorious glee
Lies desert in thy brain.

When first my father settled here,
'T was then the frontier line;
The panther's scream filled night with
fear
And bears preyed on the swine.

But woe for bruin's short-lived fun
When rose the squealing cry;
Now man and horse, with dog and
gun
For vengeance at him fly.

A sound of danger strikes his ear;
He gives the breeze a snuff;
Away he bounds, with little fear,
And seeks the tangled rough.

On press his foes, and reach the
ground
Where's left his half-munched meal;
The dogs, in circles, scent around
And find his fresh made trail.

With instant cry, away they dash,
And men as fast pursue;
O'er logs they leap, through water
splash
And shout the brisk halloo.

Now to elude the eager pack
Bear shuns the open ground,
Through matted vines he shapes his
track,
And runs it, round and round.

The tall, fleet cur, with deep-mouthed voice
Now speeds him, as the wind;
While half-grown pup, and short
legged fice
Are yelping far behind.

And fresh recruits are dropping in
To join the merry corps;
With yelp and yell, a mingled din—
The woods are in a roar.

And round, and round the chase now
goes,
The world's alive with fun;
Nick Carter's horse his rider throws,
And Mose Hill drops his gun.

Now, sorely pressed, bear glances
back,

And lolls his tired tongue,
When as, to force him from his track
An ambush on him sprung.

Across the glade he sweeps for flight
And fully is in view—
The dogs, new fired by the sight
Their cry and speed renew.

The foremost ones now reach his rear;
He turns, they dash away,
And circling now the wrathful bear
They have him full at bay.

At top of speed the horsemen come.
All screaming in a row—
'Whoop!' 'Take him, Tiger!' 'Seize
him, Drum!'
Bang—bang! the rifles go!

And furious now, the dogs he tears,
And crushes in his ire—
Wheels right and left, and upward
rears,
With eyes of burning fire.

But leaden death is at his heart—
Vain all the strength he plies,
And, spouting blood from every part,
He reels, and sinks, and dies!

And now a dinsome clamor rose,—
‘But who should have his skin?’
Who first draws blood, each hunter
knows
The prize must always win.

But, who did this, and how to trace
What’s true from what’s a lie,—
Like lawyers in a murder case
They stoutly argufy.

Aforesaid fice, of blustering mood,
Behind, and quite forgot,
Just now emerging from the wood
Arrives upon the spot,

With grinning teeth, and up-turned
hair
Brim full of spunk and wrath,
He growls, and seizes on dead bear
And shakes for life and death—

And swells, as if his skin would tear,
 And growls, and shakes again,
And swears, as plain as dog can
 swear
That he has won the skin!

Conceited whelp! we laugh at thee,
 Nor mind that not a few
Of pompous, two-legged dogs there
 be
Conceited quite as you.





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